

Cover Page

To be developed in state agency (DCF or DPI)

**2011**  
**Early Childhood Advisory**  
**Council**

A report to  
**Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker**

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## DRAFT Executive Summary

The Wisconsin Early Childhood Advisory Council was established in December, 2008 and continues work focused on the initial directive that its work should be dedicated to building a comprehensive, sustainable early childhood system. Wisconsin's vision is that: "Every child will be healthy, nurtured, safe and successful." In the last year highlights of Wisconsin's effort to strengthen the early childhood system included:

- **Increased Resources for Home Visiting.** Over \$4 million dollars in competitive federal funds were secured that will be deployed to further expand evidence-based home visiting programs in Wisconsin.
- **YoungStar Successfully Launched.** Wisconsin's quality rating improvement system has successfully enrolled Wisconsin's early childhood programs that receive Wisconsin Shares; all programs that submitted their applications as of June 30, 2011 are now rated. The most recent data available shows that x % are 5 star; ... 4 star (will fill in with year end #s)
- **Statewide Early Childhood Literacy Assessment Recommended.** It is anticipated that the Governor's Read to Lead Task Force will recommend X
- **Four-Year Old Kindergarten (4K) Continued to Reach More Children.** Four-year-old kindergarten (4K) continued to expand; at the start of the 2011-2012 school year, the program is in 89% of the elementary school districts, serving 46,022 children. Community Approaches continue to expand with over 100 school districts partnering with child care and/or Head Start to implement 4K in community sites.

The Council met four times in 2011 and hosted an annual public input session in August, 2011. The year's work oversaw some important milestones and events that continue to shape the early care and education landscape in Wisconsin and follow recommendations spelled out in the Council's first annual report published in December, 2010. Examples of specific initiatives guided by the ECAC in 2011 include the following.

- **Submission of a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTTT-ELC).** Grant articulated ECAC-endorsed reform agenda and proposed major activities consistent with ECAC 2010 and evolving goals proposed in this report.
- **Recommendations for Screening and Assessment.** A series of recommendations are being finalized by the Screening and Assessment workgroup that will provide a vision for an aligned screening and assessment process for young children in the state. This work is supported by the ECAC with consultation from Katherine Magnuson, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin.
- **Early Childhood - Longitudinal Data System Project Charter Signed.** The Department of Children and Families, the Department of Health Services and the Department of Public Instruction signed the EC-LDS Charter that establishes goals, objectives and deliverables of an early childhood data system.
- **Recommendation of a Public-Private Funding Board.** An Ad Hoc Committee of business leaders and ECAC members designed a structure for a public-private partnership to support an early childhood system and quality improvement efforts.
- **Progress on Home Visiting Committee.** The Committee identified outcome priorities, developed two sub-committees on evaluation, program improvement and played a critical role in grant preparation that resulted in additional funding.

- **Professional Development Policy Scan Completed.** Strategic priorities for further aligning early childhood career opportunities and career paths in Wisconsin were developed and form the basis of proposed ECAC recommendations included in this report.

**Based on the activities in 2011, the ECAC has proposed the following goals for 2012.**

1. **Continue to Develop a Coherent Approach to Screening and Assessment.** The State should:
  - a. adopt a timeline with recommended ages for screening and assessment of a young child's development and related health matters;
  - b. work with state departments and other public and private partners to develop cross-sector approaches to promote the implementation of this schedule for all children; and,
  - c. continue to align screening and assessment efforts with a state data system;
  - d. The State should develop and implement a comprehensive statewide kindergarten assessment process.
2. **Create an Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (EC-LDS)** including identification of key indicators to as a public report card on early childhood and securing resources to implement the work plan that is being developed.
3. **Develop a Public-Private Board to Support Early Childhood Efforts.** The board will leverage resources and engage communities to improve early childhood development. It will be directly linked to the ECAC that would launch effort by connecting with an existing 501(c)(3) organization and later transition to a more permanent structure.
4. **Expand Evidence Based Home Visiting.** Support Families and Communities by:
  - a. implementing a comprehensive training and technical assistance plan to assist all existing and new home visiting programs in moving to evidence based models; and,
  - b. focusing all programs on three critical home visiting outcomes- reducing child abuse/neglect, improving child health and improving school readiness.
5. **Align and Improve Access to Early Childhood Professional Development Opportunities.** Continue to develop a comprehensive cross-sector professional development system, including:
  - a. alignment of early learning standards with K-12 common core standards through connections among DPI, DCF, DHS, and the Registry;
  - b. facilitating implementation of best practices, including communities of practice, coaching, mentoring, and ongoing technical assistance to improve early childhood quality; and,
  - c. exploring the enhancement of the progression of early childhood teaching credentials and licenses that align and cross systems.
6. **Improve Young Child Health and Wellness.** The 2010 ECAC System Assessment identified a number of issues, including oral health, infant social and emotional health, improving connections between children in child welfare and high quality early education experience, and access to mental health services for children and families.

Moving forward in 2012, Wisconsin will document the progress toward identified goals. Additional efforts will include finalizing operating principles for the Council, working to better develop a brand for Wisconsin's early childhood system development efforts that have been guided by the Council, and, expanding efforts in the area of promoting safe and healthy children.

The ECAC was established in December, 2008 by Executive Order #269. The Executive Order directs the Council to submit a statewide strategic plan for the early childhood system to the Governor. The 36-member ECAC is co-chaired by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Secretary, Eloise Anderson and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Anthony Evers.

### **Charge to the ECAC**

The charge to the Council includes:

- Using the findings of 2010 system assessment and other current research that provides critical information about the quality and availability of early childhood programs to determine key early childhood system needs and identified outcomes.
- Identifying opportunities for collaboration and coordination.
- Developing recommendations for increasing participation in early childhood programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special need populations; and,
- Developing recommendations regarding professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators.

### **Strategic Plan**

This second annual report from the ECAC reports on the progress made since the original 2010 report, and reports on efforts identified to design an effective early childhood system in Wisconsin. The overarching vision for all efforts is to improve outcomes for children in school and in life. The 2011 plan builds on a long history of early childhood system building efforts and builds off of the 2010 recommendations.

## Wisconsin's Strong Early Childhood System Foundation

Wisconsin's early childhood system has critical building blocks that provide a strong foundation for ECAC goals in 2012.

- **Commitment to cross-sector collaboration.** The creation of Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP) in 1995 was integrated with Wisconsin's Early Child Comprehensive Systems grant in 2004. Together these efforts have provided critical cross-sector support, coordination, and resources for the ECAC.
- **Strong Professional Development Structure.** National recognition of professional development work including featuring Wisconsin's professional development efforts as part of a national professional development symposium held in 2009 by the
- **Strong Regulatory System.** Wisconsin's child care regulatory system has been rated the 6<sup>th</sup> most comprehensive system by the National Association of Regulatory Agencies (NARA) in 2009.
- **Recognition of Quality Rating Improvement System.** In 2010, YoungStar was recognized as a top ten policy innovations by Zero to Three, the national advocacy organization. The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Collaborative cited Wisconsin's health and wellness standards as a national model.
- **Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards.** (WMELS) created in 2003 cover all domains of development and have served as a model for other states.
- **Strengthening Families.** Wisconsin was one of the first states to pilot the Strengthening Families Training and continues to offer this training and incorporates it into the YoungStar QRIS criteria.
- **Social and Emotional Health** Wisconsin was one of four states to receive funding for training using the Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, "Pyramid Model" to promote understanding of infant mental health issues in early childhood.
- **Infant Mental Health Endorsement Adopted in Wisconsin.** Credential developed that helps individuals learn new skills to support the social and emotional development and well-being of young children in the context of their family/caregiver relationships.
- **Business engagement in early childhood.** In 2008, Wisconsin formed the Partnership for Wisconsin's Economic Success (PWES), the first state chapter of the national Partnership for America's Economic Success, whose mission is to elevate young children as one of the state's top priorities. PWES members serve on the ECAC. A CED sponsored meeting was held in May, 2018 that research about the benefits childhood investment benefits, successful models in states that have invested in early childhood and achieved better outcomes for children and involved fifty business leaders, legislators and early childhood stakeholders.
- **A Governor-led Read to Lead Task Force** sharpened the focus on the critical early literacy skills of children and an important foundation for school success. This task force has recommended that (will incorporate when final)

Increased investments in early care and education programs have resulted in more children and their families having access to high quality early care and education opportunities.

- **Investments in 4K.** There has been a 48% increase in students between 2007 and 2010; today, 89% of public elementary school districts are offering preschool to all 4-year-olds. Wisconsin is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation in access to 4-year-old preschool.
- **Collaborative 4K.** There has been a corresponding growth in the number of school districts that offer community collaborative programs.
- **Head Start and Early Head Start.** In 2010, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding was secured to support six new Early Head Start (EHS) program, including two American Indian programs. ARRA support allowed 5 existing EHS programs to expand their programs.

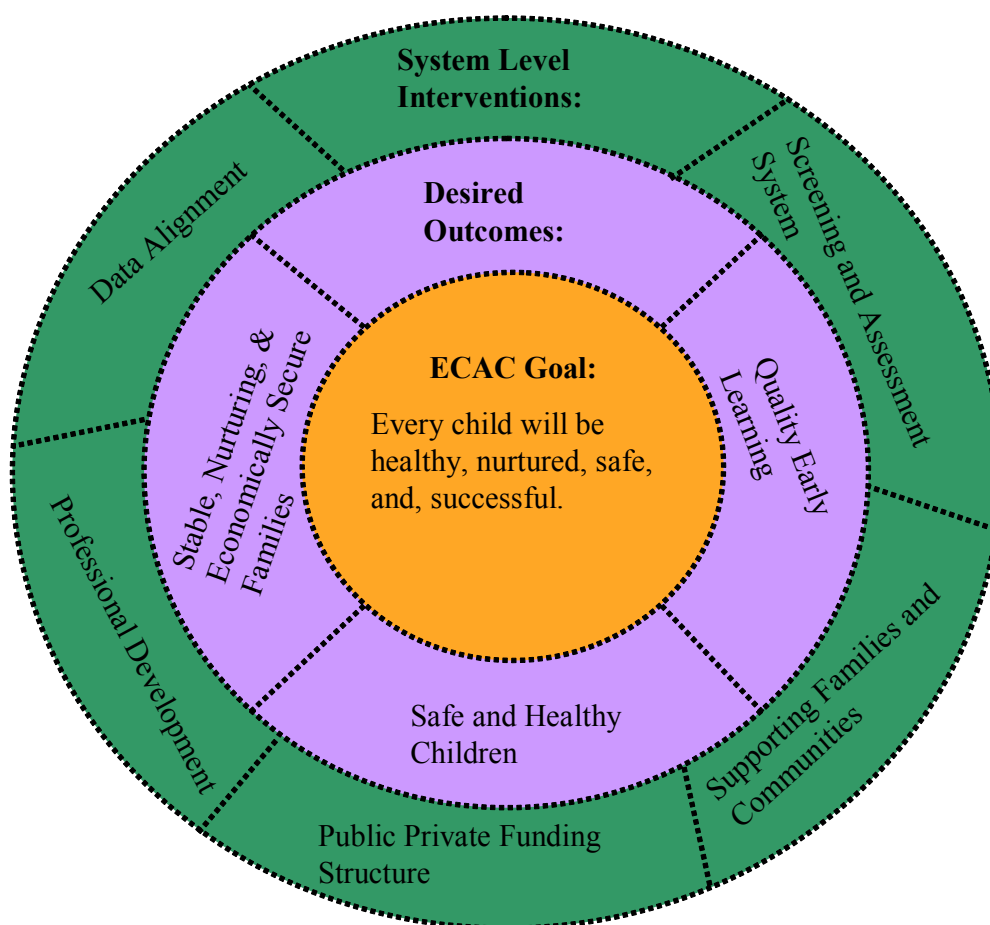
- **State Funding for Head Start.** The state supplement for Head Start has been provided for the last fifteen years making Wisconsin one of only 13 states providing state resources for Head Start and allows Wisconsin to consistently serve more eligible children.
- **Quality Rating System Launched.** In 2010, Wisconsin more than doubled investments in quality with initiation of YoungStar, Wisconsin's quality rating improvement system focused on improving the quality of child care for its most vulnerable children. Successful launching of YoungStar that now has more than 90% of programs that receive Wisconsin Shares participating. Technical assistance and formal rating observations are taking place to rate, monitor and help programs improve quality.
- **Generous Child Care Subsidy Program.** Since 1997, Wisconsin has maintained Wisconsin Shares as a critical support for working families. Despite state fiscal challenges, this program remains a priority with no waiting list.
- **Increase in State Home Visiting Services.** Between 2007 and 2010, Wisconsin increased the number of families receiving state-funded home visiting services by 57%. Enrollment is expected to increase by an additional 45% in 2011-2012 because of Wisconsin's successful application to receive nearly \$5 million in competitive MIECHV funding. Funding that will allow the state to expand home visiting services by more than 45%; there are currently 1,100 children who served in evidence-based home visiting programs.

The Council was active in different activities that have formed the basis for the 2011 goals articulated in this report. Significant activities included:

- **Articulating Early Childhood Reform Agenda.** Use of Council approved goals to shape Wisconsin's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant that helped to further sharpen the focus on key system strengths and challenges and shaped the proposed goals for 2011 that will guide Council activities in 2011
- **Screening and Assessment Committee work.** Workgroup has developed a guidance document including definitions, schedules, principles, tools, and community models and continues to explore alignment of community screening and assessment processes.
- **Progress Toward Establishing an Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System** – Activities in 2011 included signing project charter; hiring of project staff, completion of a work plan, planning for a data roundtable to solicit broad input and buy-in. See appendix ? for charter.
- **Proposing a Public-Private Funding Structure.** An Ad Hoc Committee comprised of business leaders and ECAC members helped to design an advance a proposal for a Public-Private Partnership that will be connected to the ECAC and provide a public-private source of funding to support early childhood system and quality improvement efforts – see Appendix ? for full report.
- **Development of Professional Development Policy Recommendations.** A Professional Development Policy Scan outlined key strategies for further alignment of the early care and education professional development higher education opportunities –see Appendix ?
- **Ad Hoc Home Visiting Committee Work.** The Committee identified outcome priorities, developed two sub-committees on evaluation, program improvement and played a critical role in grant preparation that resulted in additional funding.
- **Highlighting Visibility of Early Childhood.** Council Steering Committee beginning work on a more familiar “brand” that encompasses Wisconsin's systematic efforts focused on improving outcomes for children.
- **Elevating importance of Early Learning.** Creation of an Office of Early Learning at DPI to bring together early learning programs and elevate the importance of birth to five educational efforts in DPI.

## 2012 Goals for Wisconsin

The Council continues to emphasize a systematic approach to continued early childhood system building efforts. The ECAC continues to play a critical role in establishing cross-sector leadership and support of goals and guiding principles outlined in 2010 annual report that shaped 2011 and the 2012 goals outlined in this report. Goals established for 2012 articulated in the following five pages continue to emphasize data-driven decision making, quality improvement and cross-sector collaboration. The following visual depicts the guiding outcomes for the ECAC that frame the 2012 goals.





## **Early Childhood Screening and Assessment**

**Desired Outcome:** Wisconsin will have better and more consistent information about young children at key developmental milestones for use in planning early childhood policies, programs and services.

**2011 Goal:** Create a Comprehensive Screening and Assessment System: Create a comprehensive screening and assessment system to identify children's individual development needs and to facilitate referrals to appropriate services.

### **2011 Activities**

A Screening and Assessment workgroup:

- Is drafting guidance document including definitions, schedules, principles, tools, and community models.
- And, exploring alignment of community screening and assessment processes.

A cross-department team working on Wisconsin's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant focused on:

- How to better understand the status of children's learning and development upon kindergarten assessment.

### **2012 Goals**

- The State should adopt a timeline with recommended ages for screening and assessment of a young child's development and related health matters.
- The state should work with state departments and other public and private partners to develop cross-sector approaches to promote the implementation of this schedule for all children.
- The state should continue to align screening and assessment efforts with a state data system;
- The State should develop and implement a comprehensive assessment process for children that have entered kindergarten.

## **Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System**

**Desired Outcome:** Wisconsin will be able to track child outcomes across systems to better determine young children's progress and guide early childhood system planning.

**2011 Goal:** Create an Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System for planning and decision-making to ensure that outcomes are measured and evaluated.

### **2011 Key Related Activities:**

- Hired key staff using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds and DPI Longitudinal Data System funds.
- Initiated EC-LDS workgroup that developed a detailed work plan and communication strategy that included: high level department briefings, presenting at national conferences, identifying key policy questions the EC-LDS should address, identifying possible indicators to track, and, conducting an inventory of potential programs that EC-LDS should include.
- Secured a signed cross-department Project Charter spelling out the work plan and expectations for the EC-LDS.
- Requested funding for system implementation in Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge application.

### **2012 Goals**

- Develop an annual and ongoing public reporting function that is based on identified indicators of success.
- Host a data roundtable to engage key program stakeholders in identifying key underlying questions and issues to shape EC-LDS.
- Identify data that answers roundtable questions, and indicate school readiness, determine linkages needed between agencies, and identify data gaps.
- Develop methodology across sectors to share appropriate data that benefits young children.
- Formalize data governance, usage and privacy policies.
- Secure resources to implement the EC-LDS.

## **Public Private Partnership**

**Desired Outcome:** More private resources are generated and targeted towards desired outcomes and priorities for young children.

### **2011 Goal**

**Develop Infrastructure:** Explore and develop infrastructure models that align and leverage state, regional and local resources, and engage the business, private and philanthropic sectors as partners to improve early childhood outcomes.

### **2011 Key Related Activities**

An Ad Hoc Committee of ECAC members and business representatives outside the ECAC convened to discuss specifics of this recommendation that include:

- The board should be tied to the ECAC
- The board should launch by connecting with an existing 501 (c) 3 and later transition to a more permanent structure.
- The board should eventually have 17 public and private members
- Funding would include public and private sector support including measurable outcomes and benchmarks
- Board would adopt a plan that defines “local community structures” as the grant recipients
- Board would seek a public grant for administrative support and to attract private sector matching funds.

This concept was included in Wisconsin’s RTTT – ELCG and funds were requested to initiate the “public” funding part of the board.

### **2012 Goal**

Wisconsin should establish a Public Private Board that will leverage resources and engage communities to improve early childhood development.

## **Supporting Families and Community Partnerships**

**Desired Outcome:** Families are better supported to provide stable and nurturing environments for their children.

### **2011 Goal**

Families and communities foster stable and nurturing environments

#### **2011 Key Related Activities**

- Funding secured through competitive home visiting grant through the Affordable Care Act that adds two programs in Milwaukee, 3 Tribal programs in Burnett, Rock and Brown County.
- Established regional home visiting Communities of Practice and a Home Visiting Mentor Protégé Program to support implementation of evidence-based home visiting programs.
- Made recommendations for additions and enhancements to state data system for home visiting programs.
- Proposed the alignment of cross-sector, culturally appropriate, evidence-based family engagement strategies in RTTT-ELC proposal.

### **2012 Goal**

Supporting Families and Communities by:

- Implementing a comprehensive training and technical assistance plan to assist all existing and new home visiting programs in moving to evidence based models and,
- Focusing all programs on three critical home visiting outcomes key outcomes- reducing child abuse/neglect, improving child health and improving school readiness.

## **Professional Development**

**Desired Outcome:** More children have access to quality early learning through ensuring increased access to cross-sector, culturally and linguistically appropriate professional development opportunities.

### **2011 Goal**

Build on and coordinate existing professional development structures to create a system to train teachers, caregivers, and other providers to facilitate children's competencies in all areas of development.

### **2011 Key Related Activities**

- Professional Development Initiative (PDI ) recreated to focus on continued cross-sector professional development work
- Professional Development Policy Scan completed
- Creation of Office of Early Learning initiated that would serve as a center for cross-sector early childhood professional development
- Expanded training and technical assistance on Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and the Pyramid Model for Social and Emotional Development.
- Development of a plan to support evidence-based home visiting that includes professional development.
- Worked to include expanded support for activities related to Professional Development such as waiving fees for The Registry in RTTT-ELC

### **2012 Goals**

- Continuing to develop a comprehensive cross-sector professional development that includes teachers, caregivers, administrators and others related to early learning.
- Continue to align early learning standards with K-12 common core standards through connections among DPI, DCF, DHS, and The Registry;
- Facilitating implementation of best practices, including communities of practice, coaching, mentoring, and ongoing technical assistance to improve early childhood quality and,
- Exploring the enhancement of the progression of early childhood teaching credentials and licenses that align and cross systems.

## **Safe and Healthy Children**

**Desired Outcome:** All young children are physically, socially and emotionally healthy.

### **2011 Goal**

Improve the safety and well-being of children and families by:

- identifying and addressing racial and ethnic health disparities;
- addressing oral health concerns,
- establishing community response system to better support children and families when there is risk of neglect.
- Expand access to mental health services for children and their families
- equipping parents, caregivers and professionals with improved skills to better understand and build their young child's social and emotional competence

### **2011 Key Related Activities**

- Healthy children committee met several times to develop screening and assessment recommendations as described earlier.
- Infant Mental Health Endorsement introduced and implemented, x # of people participating.
- Community Response programs supported through a shifting of funding and priorities from Children's Trust Fund
- Oral health summit and planning efforts (Linda)
- State team attended national conference Child Welfare, the Courts and Schools and identified goals around better connections between child welfare and quality early experiences such as Head Start.
- Efforts to support increase pyramid model training around social and emotional foundations for early learning were included in Wisconsin's Race to the Top application.

### **2012 Goals**

- Expand current focus of Healthy Children Committee to include improved wellness in areas identified in 2010 System Assessment such as oral health, infant social and emotional health, improving connections between children in child welfare and high quality early education experience, and access to mental health services for children and families.

**Potential Appendices**

- a. Race to the Top Logic Model
- b. Operating Principles
- c. Potentially pull some data or use highlight boxes to highlight key activities pulled from the grant possibly
- d. Look at RTTT for any data snippets that could be included in a summary page
- e. EC LDS Charter
- f. Public/Private Structure
- g. Periodicity Schedule
- h. Professional Development Scan